

CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. A method of presenting a computer user interface for performing an
5 action on a selected displayed item out of a plurality of displayed items, the method
comprising:
presenting a moveable displayed user interface element comprising an area
displayed within the user interface element for receiving an activation;
responsive to detecting that the user interface element is over a displayed
10 item, selecting the displayed item; and
responsive to receiving an activation of the area displayed within the user
interface element, causing the action to be performed on the selected displayed item.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the selecting comprises highlighting
15 the displayed item.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the moveable displayed user interface
element comprises at least one user interface element within the displayed user
interface element.
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4. The method of claim 3 wherein the at least one user interface element
within the displayed user interface element comprises a button.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the user interface elements within the
25 displayed user interface element comprise a button for confirming the action and a
button for canceling the action.
6. The method of claim 3 wherein the user interface elements within the
displayed user interface element comprise a button and a text box.
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7. The method of claim 6 wherein the text box is updated to indicate information about a displayed item when the displayed user interface element moves over the displayed item.

5 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the computer user interface comprises a displayed pointer separate from the moveable displayed user interface element, the method further comprising:

responsive to determining the moveable displayed user interface element is being dragged by the displayed pointer, repositioning the moveable displayed user
10 interface element.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
responsive to detecting that the user interface element is over a displayed
item, displaying information about the displayed item.

15 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the information about the displayed item is displayed within the moveable user interface element.

20 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
accepting a modification of the information; and
modifying the displayed item in accordance with the accepted modification.

25 12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
accepting a modification of the information; and
sending the modification to a server computer for processing.

13. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
responsive to detecting that the user interface element is over one of the
displayed items, displaying properties of the displayed item.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein
the item appears in the rendered version of a web page stored at a server; and
the action modifies information for presenting the web page stored at the
5 server.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein
a description of the action is presented within the moveable displayed user
interface element.

10 16. The method of claim 1 wherein
a description of the action is presented within the area displayed within the
user interface element.

15 17. The method of claim 16 wherein
the description comprises a text description of the action.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein
the description comprises the word 'delete.'

20 19. The method of claim 1 wherein the action comprises moving the
displayed item, the method further comprising:
responsive to receiving the activation, moving the moveable displayed user
interface element along with the item.

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20. A method of presenting a computer user interface for performing operations on displayed items, the method comprising:

receiving an indication that a particular function is to be performed on a displayed item;

5 responsive to receiving the indication that a particular function is to be performed on the displayed item, displaying a moveable displayed user interface element for performing the particular function;

responsive to determining the moveable displayed user interface element has been moved over the displayed item, selecting the displayed item; and

10 responsive to receiving an activation indication, performing the particular function on the selected displayed item.

21. A moveable displayed user interface element for performing an operation on a set of one or more items out of a plurality of items displayed on a display as part of a user interface, the moveable displayed user interface element operable to cause selection of the set of one or more items as it is moved about the display, the user interface element comprising:

15 at least one area of the user interface element which is designated for receiving an activate indication from a user to initiate the operation on the selected set of one or more items.

22. The moveable displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the moveable displayed user interface element is operable to be moved by being dragged by a displayed pointer.

23. The moveable displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising an area indicating a name of the operation initiated on the selected set of one or more items.

24. The moveable displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the display comprises a window presented by an Internet browser; and the moveable displayed user interface element causes selection of items displayed within the window presented by the Internet browser.

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25. The moveable displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the moveable displayed user interface element further comprises a separate drag area for moving the moveable displayed user interface element about the display.

10 26. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the display comprises a table, and the plurality of items comprises columns in the table.

27. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the area designated for receiving an activate indication is a displayed button.

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28. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising: an area which is designated for canceling the operation upon activation.

29. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising:
20 an area which is designated for saving the operation upon activation.

30. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation comprises a plurality of steps.

25 31. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a delete operation.

32. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a move operation.

33. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a format operation.

5 34. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a buy operation.

35. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a spellcheck operation.

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36. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 wherein the operation is a get information operation.

37. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising
15 an area operable to cause the displayed user interface element to move to a displayed item neighboring a currently-selected displayed item.

38. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising
an area operable to cause the displayed user interface element to move from a
20 currently-selected displayed item to a displayed next item.

39. The displayed user interface element of claim 21 further comprising:
a display area for presenting information about a selected item.

25 40. The displayed user interface element of claim 39 wherein the information about the selected item is editable to modify the selected item.

41. The displayed user interface element of claim 39 wherein the display area for presenting information about a selected area is inhibited during movement of the user interface element.

5 42. The displayed user interface element of claim 39 wherein the display area automatically updates information about the selected item when the item is selected.

10 43. The displayed user interface element of claim 42 wherein the information about the selected item comprises a property of the selected item.

15 44. The displayed user interface element of claim 42 wherein the information about the selected item comprises formatting information about the selected item.

45. The displayed user interface element of claim 42 wherein the information about the selected item comprises a name of the selected item.

20 46. A moveable displayed user interface element operable to select an item displayed on a user interface when the displayed user interface element is moved over the item, the moveable displayed user interface element comprising:
a display area comprising a name of an operation;
a button for receiving an indication that the operation is to be performed on the item selected.

25 47. The moveable displayed user interface element of claim 46 wherein the moveable displayed user interface element is implemented as a DHTML DIV element.

48. A user interface displayed on a display, the user interface comprising:
means for selecting a displayed item displayed on the display when a
moveable displayed user interface element is moved over the displayed item; and
on the moveable displayed user interface element, displayed means for
5 receiving an activation indication to perform an operation on the selected item.

49. A computer-implemented system for determining when a moveable
displayed item is moved over one of a plurality of displayed regions to thereby select
one of a plurality of potential targets, wherein the regions are associated with the
10 targets, the system comprising:
a list of the plurality of displayed regions;
acquire-target functionality designated for execution when the moveable
displayed item acquires a target;
release-target functionality designated for execution when the moveable
15 displayed item releases the target; and
functionality operable to consult the list of regions to determine whether a
moveable displayed item enters or exits any of the regions and further operable to
invoke the acquire-target and release-target functionality with respect to a target
associated with the region into which or out of which the moveable displayed item
20 enters or exits.

50. A computer-implemented method for determining over which of a set
of potential targets displayed on a display a moveable displayed item has been
moved, the method comprising:
25 assembling a list of regions corresponding to display regions associated with
the potential targets;
upon determining the moveable displayed item has been moved to a location,
consulting the list of regions to determine whether the moveable displayed item has
been moved over one of the potential targets; and

upon determining the moveable displayed item has been moved over one of the potential targets, taking an action with respect to the one of the potential targets.